



FOXES
IN A FIX

ALSO BY W. BRUCE CAMERON

Bailey's Story

Bella's Story

Cooper's Story

Ellie's Story

Lily's Story

Max's Story

Molly's Story

Shelby's Story

Toby's Story

Lily to the Rescue

Lily to the Rescue: Two Little Piggies

Lily to the Rescue: The Not-So-Stinky Skunk

Lily to the Rescue: Dog Dog Goose

Lily to the Rescue: Lost Little Leopard

Lily to the Rescue: The Misfit Donkey

W. BRUCE CAMERON

LILY
TO THE rescue

FOXES
IN A FIX

Illustrations by

JAMES BERNARDIN



A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK

NEW YORK

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, organizations, and events portrayed in this novel are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

LILY TO THE RESCUE: FOXES IN A FIX

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A Starscape Book
Published by Tom Doherty Associates
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

www.tor-forge.com

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 978-1-250-76272-6 (trade paperback)

ISBN 978-1-250-76279-5 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-1-250-76273-3 (ebook)

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First Edition: September 2021

Printed in the United States of America

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*Dedicated to the kindhearted folks of the Humane
Society of Indiana, saving lives since 1905.*

1



The smells coming in through the open window of the car were cool and clean. They told my nose that our car ride was taking us to a place called “Up in the Mountains.”

Dad was in the front seat of the car, and I was in the back with my girl, Maggie Rose. Her skin smelled sweet, with another odor I thought of as “soft.” Her lap was a sweet, soft place.

Maggie Rose leaned forward to speak to

horns on their heads, standing around on a big rock as if they were stuck. Dogs can always think of something fun to do, even on a rock. But not these creatures. They looked ready to stand there all day.

“Why does Mr. Martin live way up here?” Maggie Rose asked. “There’s hardly anybody around.”

“I think that’s the point.” Dad chuckled. “He used to be a pilot, so he spent his life in airports and big cities all over the world. Now he just wants peace and quiet.”

Maggie Rose stroked my back. “Does he at least have a dog?”

Dad smiled sadly. “He had one. But it had to be put to sleep last spring.”

“Oh,” Maggie Rose said. She hugged me tightly and put her face in the fur on the back of my neck. “I hate hearing that,” she mumbled.

Dad nodded. “I know, hon. Dogs don’t live

forever. So we have to love them while we have them, don't we?"

Maggie Rose lifted her face. "I know what we should do. Let's invite Mr. Martin to come down to Mom's rescue and get a new dog!"

"Oh, I've mentioned it before," Dad replied. "He always says he's not ready."

My girl was quiet for a moment, then brightened. "Once he meets Lily, he'll realize he needs a dog for sure!"

Dad nodded. "Might work."

My girl grabbed my face with both hands. "Okay, Lily, you need to be on your very best behavior. Your job is to convince Mr. Martin he *has* to have a dog."

I felt I was being told something very important, and hoped it had to do with bacon.

The car bumped a few times and then stopped. We were here!

Where was "here"?

Maggie Rose opened the door, and I jumped

out and drank in the odors. “Here” was trees and a cold breeze and big looming hills and wet, muddy ground. We headed toward a wooden cabin. A man walked out onto the front porch.

“Hello, James,” he called. “Is that you, Maggie Rose? You’ve gotten so big! Are you in college now?”

My girl laughed. “Third grade!”

A new friend! I charged over to run up the steps and put my feet up on the man’s legs to sniff him. He smelled of coffee and some kind of salty cheese.

“Friendly little thing, isn’t she?” the man said.

“Lily,” my girl wailed. “You got muddy paw prints all over Mr. Martin’s pants!”

“Oh, that’s all right,” the man answered. I wagged at him. Would he be willing to share some of that cheese with a certain good dog?

Maggie Rose and Dad climbed up the

steps. “Hi, Mark. It’s been too long!” Dad greeted him.

“That it has,” the new man agreed. “Come in. Nice to have company.”

We all started in through the open door, but my girl pulled on my collar. “Lily,” she said, “remember, you have to be a *good dog!*”

I wagged. I love being called a good dog by my girl.

Inside the cabin I sniffed for food crumbs. The grown-ups sat down on chairs near a big window to talk. People like to do that.

Maggie Rose walked over to see what the books on a bookshelf smelled like. I joined her. Sadly, they smelled like books. “Mr. Martin?” she called. “Did you make these model airplanes?”

The new man—he was probably “Mr. Martin”—looked over at us. “Sure did. Those are all of the planes I flew.”

“Wow,” Maggie Rose said.

“You can pick them up if you want,” Mr. Martin offered.

Maggie Rose carefully pulled something off the shelf and studied it. Then she leaned down to show it to me.

I sniffed it. It was a plastic toy! I lunged and grabbed it.

Maggie Rose gasped. “Lily!”

I backed away and my girl followed. Time to play Chase-Me! I dashed around the couch and she followed. “Lily!” she called frantically.

I raced across a rug and it bunched under my paws. Maggie Rose tripped over it and grabbed at a lamp, which fell over with a *thump*. I spat out a piece of the toy and jumped onto a chair, sending some pillows flying, then leapt over a coffee table and ran back to shake the toy in Maggie Rose’s face.

Instead of trying to grab the toy so we

could both pull on it, Maggie Rose snatched at my collar. Then she pulled the toy right out of my mouth. It seemed like she had forgotten how to play Chase-Me.

Dad came over to help pick up the lamp and the things that had fallen off the coffee table. “Sorry about that, Mark,” he said.

“I’m so sorry,” my girl added. She leaned

down to whisper in my ear. “Would you *please* be a good dog? It’s *important!*”

I loved the feeling of her breath in my ear.

“No harm done,” Mr. Martin said. “I can easily glue that propeller back on.”

“Lily’s usually such a good dog,” Maggie Rose told him.

I wagged. Yes, I was a good dog. I was also an expert at spotting squirrels—and I could see one right now, hopping in the backyard. I barked in joy and dove forward.

Crash! My face hit a window that I hadn’t noticed. A wet smear painted the glass.

The squirrel was still there, only a few feet away. It was holding a pine cone in its mouth. It didn’t seem to care about me at all. I barked in frustration.

“Lily! No!” my girl said sharply.

From her tone of voice, I could tell she had not seen the squirrel.

Mr. Martin laughed softly. “I’d forgotten

what it's like to have a dog. They can be quite a handful!"

My girl's shoulders slumped.

Mr. Martin took a sip from his mug. "All right, James," he said. "So what's so important you had to come all the way up here to tell me in person?"

2



Dad took a swallow from his mug and then set it down very carefully. Maggie Rose went back to the bookshelves but didn't hand me another toy.

“So what if I told you I had a job for you, flying animals to Alaska, and it pays zero, plus you'd have to buy your own gas?” Dad asked Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin laughed. “Well, that sounds great.”

“You know my wife’s a vet. And she does some work with the zoo. They’ve been breeding rare species there, trying to get the population numbers up,” Dad said. “They’ve been so successful with their Arctic foxes, they’re ready to release some in the wild.”

My girl looked up sharply. I stared at her alertly. Had she finally seen the squirrel? Could we go and chase it together?

Mr. Martin nodded. “Ah, okay. So that’s why you need to fly to Alaska.”

“Thing is, we don’t have much budget. It’s for a good cause, but you’d be donating everything,” James finished.

“Can I go with you, Dad? Please? Can I?” Maggie Rose blurted out.

Dad was watching Mr. Martin. “We don’t know if we’re going yet, Maggie Rose.”

Mr. Martin laughed. “That’s not playing fair, you know. How can I say no to that face? Sure, why not?”

Maggie Rose clapped her hands. “Yes!”

Dad and Mr. Martin laughed and then went back to talking while my girl leaned down to me. “We’re going on a trip, Lily! An adventure!”

I wagged at my name because my girl was excited. That always makes me happy.

Maggie Rose leaned closer and spoke even more quietly. “Now we just have to talk Mr. Martin into getting a dog.” She picked up something from the shelf that did not smell like a toy. She held it out toward Mr. Martin. “Is this your dog?” she asked him.

I heard the word “dog” and looked around, puzzled. Was there another dog somewhere?

“It is,” Mr. Martin said. “That’s Bruno. He was a good dog.”

“Mom has lots of new dogs down at the rescue,” Maggie Rose said. “Wonderful dogs. You should come and pick one out.”

Mr. Martin shook his head. “I don’t think so, hon.”

“But why not?” Maggie Rose asked.

Mr. Martin sighed. “Well, I’m not sure I’m ready. And it would be hard to find the right kind of dog for this place. We’re really only free of snow for a couple months in the summer. Bruno was a Bernese mountain dog, and he loved the snow. But it’s not every dog who can be happy up here.”

They were both saying “dog” a lot, so I couldn’t imagine why they both seemed sad. Maybe it was because Maggie Rose kept picking up things that were not toys. And then she did it again! She picked up a flat, square thing and held it out to Mr. Martin. “Who’s this boy?” she asked.

Mr. Martin smiled. “Me!” he said. “And that’s my very first dog.”

They were happier now, even though Maggie Rose was still picking up not-toys. People



are so much harder to understand than dogs.

“What’s wrong with his leg?” Maggie Rose asked.

“Just born that way, with only three legs,” Mr. Martin answered. “But it didn’t bother him any. He could run and play just like any other dog. We called him Trip.”

Dad chuckled. Mr. Martin grinned. I

thought Maggie Rose seemed a little confused. She put the flat not-toy back down on the shelf.

I trotted back to the window to see if the squirrel was in the yard. But it wasn't. I'd done my job and scared it away.

I scratched at the glass anyway.

"Can I let Lily out?" Maggie Rose asked Dad.

"Sure."

Maggie Rose slid the door open and I plunged out into the cold air and down the steps to the ground. I hurried over to some trees to see what there might be to sniff. The ground was cold and wet, squishing under my feet.

There was something else back there—the rotting body of a very large bird that had been dead for some time. It smelled *wonderful*. After sniffing it up and down, I dropped a shoulder and rolled in the delicious odors. My fur soaked up water from the muddy ground.

“Lily!”

My girl was calling me. I jumped to my feet, wagging, and then raced up to the sliding doors. Maggie Rose stood back to let me into the house. “Lily! You’re all muddy!” she cried.

I shook the water out of my fur and my girl blinked as the droplets hit her. Then she raised her wet hands to her face. “What’s that *smell*?”

Dad jumped to his feet. “She’s rolled in something dead. Ugh.”

Mr. Martin stood up as well. “There’s a utility tub in the mud room. I’ll get some old towels.”

Dad picked me up, which I usually like. But then he carried me to the back of the house and put me in a small bathtub.

What was he doing? We’d been having so much fun! Surely there wasn’t going to be a bath for such a good dog!

Well, there surely was. My girl soaped me

and rinsed me and dried me with towels. “Lily,” she moaned sadly. “You’re doing everything wrong. Mr. Martin will never want a new dog now.”

I understood exactly what was going on. She had given me a bath, and of course it made her sad. It made *all* of us sad.

She kept me wrapped in towels and sat with me in her lap on the couch. I didn’t feel much like running around anymore.

“I don’t think I’d have the energy for a new dog,” Mr. Martin said with a smile.

“But Lily is normally such a good dog! She keeps me company, she sleeps on my bed—she’s my best friend in the world.”

Mr. Martin nodded. “I felt the same way about my dog Trip—when I was a boy, we did everything together. And Bruno, he was the best friend a man could have.”

I heard a buzzing and Dad dug a phone out of his pocket. “I’d better take this. It’s my wife.”

“Of course,” Mr. Martin said.

Dad talked to his phone, which is something people do all the time, even if there is a good dog in the room willing to listen. But then he straightened in surprise. “You’ve *got* to be kidding me. No. Of course. We’ll drive straight there. See you soon.” Dad turned and shook his head.

“What’s wrong?” Mr. Martin asked.

“Looks like our trip to Alaska might be off,” Dad replied grimly.